



STATE OF NEW YORK

December 10, 2020

Alex M. Azar II  
Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

We stand together in expressing serious concern with the Trump administration's vaccine distribution plan. While we are encouraged by recent reports regarding the vaccines' efficacy, there is urgent work to be done to ensure vaccination efforts are both expeditious and fair.

Governors need federal funding in order to execute comprehensive distribution plans to guarantee that all communities have access to the vaccine. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials estimates that a comprehensive vaccine distribution program would cost approximately \$8 billion. To date, the Trump Administration has administered a mere \$200 million to the states.

Without adequate funding, distribution will not be equitable. COVID-19 has laid bare chronic health disparities in our country that led communities of color to suffer disproportionately from this virus. Communities of color disproportionately suffer from pre-existing conditions, such as asthma, obesity and hypertension, that compound the harm the virus can cause -- Black Americans died at twice the rate of white Americans due to COVID, and Latinos died at one and a half times the rate of whites. The underlying reality is that communities of color lack access to healthcare institutions and services. But in its current form, the Trump Administration's vaccine plan relies on private health facilities that have historically excluded Black and brown communities. By relying on a flawed, biased system, the administration's approach will only serve to further widen existing disparities in health outcomes.

The essential workers who carried this nation through the worst of this pandemic are predominately people of color. They especially deserve a national vaccine plan designed to ensure they are protected.

Marc Morial, undersigned and the President and CEO of the National Urban League, has said the Trump Administration's plan is, "thoughtless, careless and needs to be taken back to the drawing board." Derrick Johnson, undersigned and President and CEO of the NAACP, has said that, "any introduction of a vaccine plan devoid of the infrastructure we know is effective within the Black community reinforces the same incompetence that has affected far too many communities that have been neglected in the midst of this global pandemic." The Reverend Al Sharpton, undersigned and the President and Founder of National Action Network said, "I've seen this movie before. Many Black Americans live in healthcare deserts, where there are no hospitals or healthcare centers in our area. This has hurt us badly during the COVID crisis. This unfair treatment is about to happen again. I don't see how we will see equal distribution of the vaccine based on the federal plan. That must be fixed immediately."

The Black and brown communities that were first on the list of who died from COVID cannot be last on the list of who receives the vaccine. Our federal government needs to stand up and deliver a world-class vaccination program that quickly and comprehensively reaches underserved communities of color. The private market alone is incapable. We need to enlist faith-based organizations, neighborhood groups and local non-profits with deep roots in Black, brown and poor communities to get this done. And we need the funding to do so.

This pandemic cannot end, and our country will not truly be safe, until everyone has access to a vaccine. The Trump Administration must implement a national vaccine plan that does not leave any community behind, and it must do so now. Time is short. We stand prepared to work with your team and the federal government to execute a vaccination program worthy of these United States.

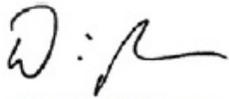
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew M. Cuomo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "C".

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

cc: President-elect Biden  
New York State Congressional Delegation  
Members of the Congressional Black Caucus

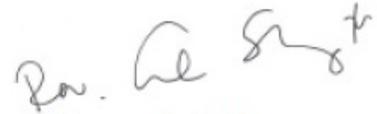
Enc. Additional Supporters



Derrick Johnson  
President & CEO  
NAACP



Marc Morial  
President & CEO  
National Urban League



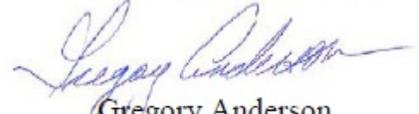
Reverend Al Sharpton  
President & Founder  
National Action Network

**Wilbur Aldridge**

Wilbur Aldridge  
Mid Hudson/Westchester Regional  
Director  
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**Kevin Alexander**

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Daniel Barber  
CCOP President  
NYCHA Citywide Council of  
Presidents

**Thomas Beauford, Jr.**

Thomas Beauford, Jr.  
President & CEO  
Buffalo Urban League



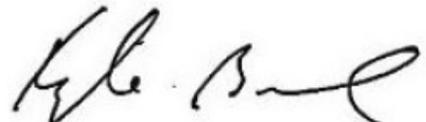
Reverend Dr. A. R. Bernard  
Senior Pastor  
Christian Cultural Center

**Twiggy Billue**

Twiggy Billue  
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Reverend Mark Blue  
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Linda Brown-Robinson  
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Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts  
Senior Pastor  
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Joy D. Calloway  
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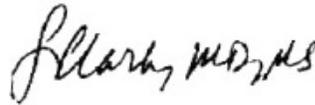
Reverend Dr. Demetrius Carolina  
Pastor & Executive Director  
First Central Baptist Church, The  
Central Family Life Center



Robin Chappelle Golston  
President & CEO  
Planned Parenthood Empire State  
Acts

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Claudia Coger  
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Annie Cotton Morris  
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President, Bakery Confectionary  
Tobacco Workers & Grain  
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**Rev. Troy DeCohen**

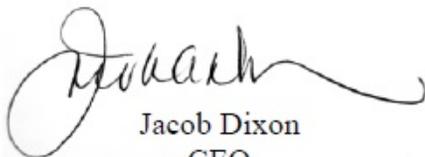
Reverend Troy DeCohen  
President  
United Black Clergy of Westchester

**Walter Dixie**

Walter Dixie  
Executive Director  
Jubilee Homes of Syracuse, Inc.

**Geroge Dixon**

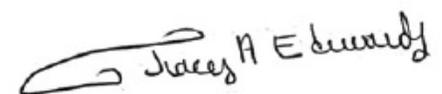
Geroge Dixon  
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Jacob Dixon  
CEO  
Choice for All



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NAACP New York State  
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Nicky Hylton-Patterson  
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Maggie Larkins  
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Isaac Melton  
Bishop  
Christian Light Missionary Baptist  
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Terrance L. Melvin  
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Nazarene, Far Rockaway

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Jacqueline Nelson  
President  
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Wade Norwood  
CEO  
Common Ground Health



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Mimi Pierre Johnson  
President & CEO  
Elmont Cultural Center



Barbara Powell  
President  
NAACP Hempstead Branch



Dr. Frances E. Pratt  
President  
Nyack Branch NAACP



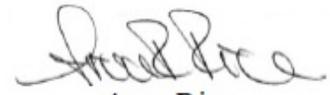
Candace Prince-Modeste  
President  
NAACP Jamaica Branch



Charles Rangel  
Former Congressman  
New York's 11th Congressional  
District



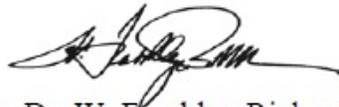
Jawwaad Rasheed  
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Mohawk Valley Frontiers  
International



Arva Rice  
President & CEO  
New York Urban League



Bishop Calvin Rice  
Senior Pastor  
New Jerusalem Worship Center



Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson  
Senior Pastor  
Grace Baptist Church  
Chairman, National Action Network



Crystal Rodriguez-Dabney  
Chief of Staff & Chief Diversity  
Officer  
Buffalo State, State University of  
New York



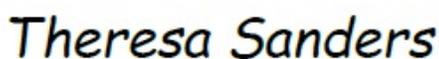
Me'Shae Rolling  
Executive Director  
Upstate Minority Economic  
Alliance



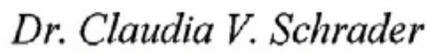
Steven Rubenstein  
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Dr. Ty Stone  
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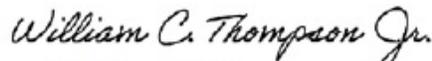
Farah Tanis  
Co-Executive Director  
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*Elgin Taylor*

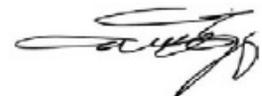
Reverend Dr. Elgin Joseph Taylor  
Vice President At-Large  
Empire Baptist Missionary  
Convention of NY, Inc.



Bishop Mitchell Taylor  
CEO  
Urban Upbound



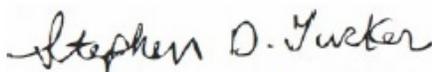
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Carol Wilkins  
Resident Association President  
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Tamika Williams  
Tenant Association President  
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*Abdul-Rahman Yaki*

Imam Abdul-Rahman Yaki  
Islamic Center of the Capital  
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*Patrick Young*

Reverend Patrick H. Young  
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First Baptist Church of Corona



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Executive Director  
STRONG Youth